



**To: Heads,
Clerks and
Chairs of Governors**

(by email to heads who are asked to ensure that the two hard copies forwarded by post are received by the Chair and the Clerk)

NEWSLETTER NO. 92

January 2008

1. Admissions

Please remember that each governing body of a voluntary aided school is required by law to **review its admission policy and agree the policy for September 2009 by 15 April 2008**. Consultations with the maintaining LA and other schools in the relevant area (as determined by your Admissions Forum) must be undertaken by 1 March 2008 and then the policy agreed by 15 April 2008. Under the new mandatory Code of Practice which applies to this round, you are also required to consult with this office. The agreed policy should then be sent to those with whom your school is required to consult. Failure to follow this whole process will render your admissions policy invalid and you could therefore be required to admit **every** child who applies for a place at your school regardless of your accommodation or financial circumstances.

A suggested timeline is given below

- Governors' meeting to agree draft policy for consultation - Dec/Jan
- Draft admissions policy circulated to consultees (LA will provide list and may circulate for the governors) – late Jan/early February
- Deadline for replies – 1 March 08
- Governors meeting to consider representations and finalise policy – between 1 March and 15 April 08
- Final policy to be published and sent out to consultees – within 14 days of finalisation

Please be aware when drawing up your oversubscription criteria of sections 2.1 to 2.49 of the Code which deal with what is and what is not acceptable practice. A diocesan model admissions policy for primary schools is attached.

2. Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges

The Diocesan Committee for Schools and Colleges met on 21 November and

- ◆ received reports from the Co-Directors and Primary and Secondary Advisers
- ◆ received reports from the Autumn 2007 meetings of the eight sub-committees
- ◆ received the capital project bids from schools and colleges for 2007/8
- ◆ considered the Department for Schools & College's report for 2006/07

3. Requests from staff for part-time or job-share arrangements

The Department was asked to provide some guidance on this during the last sub-committee cycle. The governing body, as the employer of staff, is required to give serious consideration to such requests, particularly when these follow an extended period

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of health-related absence or maternity leave. However, the employer must also take into account the needs of the 'business' and can rightfully turn down such requests where they would have a significant adverse impact. It can be helpful for the governing body to have formulated and included in its employment documentation a policy or set of principles that would guide its consideration of such requests. However, this is an area that relates to secular employment law and it is recommended that governing bodies seek the advice of those that they retain (usually the Local Authority) to provide employment guidance and support.

4. Churches in full communion with Rome

The Catholic Education Service recently re-issued the list of those Churches in full communion with Rome. Knowledge of them may be of help to governing bodies' Admissions Panels/Committees when considering applications for admission.

5. Diocesan Sub-Committee Meetings

The next meetings of the nine Diocesan Sub-Committees are as follows:

North Somerset	Wednesday 6 February 2008 at 2.00pm in St Francis, Nailsea
Wiltshire	Thursday 7 February 2008 at 4.00pm in St Augustine's Catholic College, Trowbridge
Somerset	Monday 11 February 2008 at 2.00pm in SS Joseph & Teresa School, Wells
Swindon	Tuesday 12 February 2008 at 7.30pm in Holy Family Catholic Primary School
B&NES	Tuesday 12 February 2008 at 10.45am in St John's Presbytery, Bath
Bristol	Tuesday 12 February 2008 at 2.00pm in Alexander House
Gloucestershire	Wednesday 13 February 2008 at 2.00pm in St Gregory's School
South Glos	Thursday 14 February 2008 at 2.00pm in Christ the King School

May I remind you that all **headteachers and chairs of governors** are invited to these meetings and **are asked to ensure that every school is represented at each meeting.**

On behalf of all in the Department may I wish you the very best of what 2008 can offer you, your school and your family.

With best wishes

Yours faithfully

Brendan Wall
Interim Director

APPENDIX A

MODEL POLICY

DIOCESE OF CLIFTON

St Agatha's Catholic Primary School, Bristol Admissions Policy 2009/2010

1. St Agatha's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school, which was established by the Church to serve the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine. The governing body, acting in accordance with the School Admissions Code of Practice and the Clifton Diocesan Policy Statement, is responsible for the admission of pupils.
2. The Admission Number (AN) for the Reception Year (2009/10) is pupils. Pupils are normally admitted in the September of the school year in which they reach their fifth birthday. However they are not required to attend school until the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday and so, in appropriate cases, admission may be deferred until the beginning of the Spring and Summer Terms. If parents wish a deferment they should indicate so when accepting the offer of a place.
3. Applications for a place at the school should be made on LA's common admissions form and sent to Schools Admissions Department, (*address*), by (*commonly agreed date for LA*). LA will then send details of those children whose parents have expressed a preference for St Agatha's to the Clerk to Governors at the school. The Governing Body will then seek the additional information necessary (*e.g. baptismal certificates/details, letters from priests/ministers of religion*) to apply the oversubscription criteria listed under section 5 of this policy. This must be received at the (*school/LA*) by 4pm on2008 at the latest. In the event of oversubscription, the Governing Body will apply its stated criteria to the applicants, rank them in order and notify the LA of its decisions. LA will then notify, on behalf of the governors of St Agatha's, those parents who have successfully gained a place for their child at the school on (*locally agreed date*). Those that have not will be offered a place at an alternative school by the LA.
4. A waiting list of unsuccessful applicants will be held until 2009 and then discarded. If places become available at the school before then, offers will be made in accordance with the order of priority in paragraph 5 below.
5. In the event of oversubscription (i.e. more applications than available places) places will be offered in accordance with the following order of priority.
 - 5.1 Looked After Children who are baptised Catholics.
 - 5.2 Baptised Catholic children who live in the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine.

- 5.3 Baptised Catholic children who live outside the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine and who do not have a Catholic primary school serving the parish in which they live or at whose parish school a place is not available.
- 5.4 Looked After Children for whom a place is requested by the relevant person/authority
- 5.5 Children of a Catholic parent(s) who live within the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine.
- 5.6 Children who will have a brother or a sister at the school at the time of their admission.
- 5.7 Children of other Christian faiths who live within the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine and whose parents are members of their church and have the written support of their minister (see paragraph 3 above).
- 5.8 Baptised Catholic children who live outside the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine and who fall outside Category 5.3 above.
- 5.9 Other applicants not in the above categories.

In Categories 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.8, baptismal certificates should be available for inspection.

A map of the parishes of St Agatha and St Katharine is available at the school.

Definitions

- (a) Brother and sister are defined as children who share one natural parent, step brother or sister, or have been legally adopted or fostered into the family
- (b) Looked After Children - Children who are in the care of local authorities as defined by section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked after child' is only considered as such if the local authority confirms he or she will be in public care when he or she is admitted to a school.

6. Tiebreakers

When applications within categories 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 above exceed the number of places available, priority will be given in sequence to:

- 6.1 children of multiple births
- 6.2 children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of their admission
- 6.3 children who live furthest from the nearest alternative Catholic school at which a place is available

Priority in other categories will be given in sequence to:

- 6.3 children of multiple births
- 6.4 children who have a brother or sister at the school at the time of their admission
- 6.5 children who live nearest to the school
- 6.6 random allocation (drawing of lots)

Distance:

(We would advise that schools adopt the distance measurement used by their LA or use a method that can be easily and independently verified e.g. a widely available and reliable route planner. It can be calculated “as the crow flies” from main gate/door to the main entrance to the school premises or by the nearest available walking distance (if schools have access to such figures)).

7. **Casual (in-year) applications**, i.e. those which fall outside the normal admissions round, will be considered by the Admissions Committee against the criteria listed in paragraph 5 above.

8. **Late Applications**

Applications received after the closing date given in 3 above but before the offer of places is made by the Governing Body will be considered in accordance the procedure stated in the common admission arrangements for LA.

9. In September 2007 the Governors received 35 applications which fell in the following categories:

5.1	22	5.4	4
5.2	1	5.5.	3
5.3	-	5.6	5

and admitted 30 i.e. all applicants in categories 5.1 – 5.5 inclusive.

10. **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

Parents have the right to appeal against the refusal by the Governing Body to admit their child, and should put their appeal in writing to the LA (for the normal admissions round) or to the Clerk to the Governors at the school (for in-year applications) *(unless the agreed common admission arrangements dictate otherwise)* within 14 days of receiving the letter of refusal. Appeals will be arranged on behalf of the Governing Body by the Clifton Diocese Department for Schools and Colleges and conducted in accordance with the Code of Practice on School Appeals.

11. **CHILDREN WITH STATEMENTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

There is a different procedure for the admission to school for children with Statements of Special Educational Needs: it is administered by the local education authority (LA) in whose area the family lives. The LA is responsible for issuing the Statement and consulting parents and the governing body of St. Agatha, if a preference has been made for the school, before the school is named in the Statement.

(Revised Apr 2007)

ADMISSIONS TO SCHOOL: NOTES OF EXPLANATION OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY MODEL

- Paragraph 1:** Explains the area the school was established to serve and that the Governing Body is the admission authority. In making its policy it is working with the Diocese and within the Code of Practice.
- Paragraph 2:** Each school must each year publish an Admission Number in its prospectus and elsewhere. This should be based on an Indicated Admission Number (IAN) which is itself based on the Net Capacity Assessment of the school. The governors must admit up to the IAN unless, after consultation, the Governing Body publish a statutory notice in the local newspaper indicating their intention to admit a lesser number and giving their reasons for doing so. The governors must also, in the notice, give details of how parents and others can appeal to the Schools Adjudicator against this intention. Sentences 3-5 show that the governing body will meet the wishes of parents to defer admission of their child to later in the school year (January/April) if they think their child is not ready, and reserve a place for him/her. Advice has been changed to allow the parent to seek deferment after a place has been offered to avoid any charge of refusal to admit on the grounds of losing some revenue.
- Paragraph 3:** It is good practice to tell parents when to apply and to whom, how to apply and when they will know the result of their application. All LAs have been required to agree common admission arrangements for all their schools, including voluntary aided schools. Usually this is an agreement to use a common application form which is returned initially to the LA who then informs governors of applicants to their schools. If the common admissions form does not include the information (such as date and place of Baptism) required by the Governors in order for them properly to apply their oversubscription criteria, then the school may send a supplementary information form to applicants or ask to see Baptismal Certificates etc. The content of such supplementary forms is limited by statute to that necessary for the governors to apply their oversubscription criteria only. In such cases amend this statement accordingly and as necessary to describe the local agreement. NB. In no way does the use of a common admissions form undermine the governors' right to determine who to admit into their school. Local arrangements should simply exist to make school admissions applications simpler for parents, to avoid duplication of effort and to stop multiple applications and offers of places to the children of unscrupulous parents.

Paragraph 4: There is no requirement to have a waiting list. However if you have one you must say so and when it ceases to operate.

Paragraph 5: Categories of priority need some explanation. The principles here are:

- First priority to baptised Catholic looked after children in agreed or designated parish(es).
- Second priority to baptised Catholic children in agreed or designated parish(es).
- Third priority to baptised Catholic children who do not have a Catholic school serving their parish or whose parish school is full and so a place is not available **BUT** not for those who choose not to use their parish school.
- Fourth priority to Looked After Children who are not Catholics but for whom the LA/relevant person has sought a place
- Fifth priority to children **who have a Catholic parent(s) but has/have not had the child baptised but wish a Catholic education for him/her.**
- Sixth and seventh priorities are self explanatory.
- Eighth priority is given to Catholic children who have access to their own Catholic school but for some reason or other prefer to go to another school. Governors should appreciate that this order does give priority to some non-Catholic Christians over Catholics and could be contentious in some cases. **The Governing Body may wish to give these children a higher priority in those very few cases where its Catholic school is nearer to the family home than the designated Catholic school and the LA is prepared to pay transport to the former but not the latter.**

NB: Looked after children are at a particular disadvantage and as Catholic schools would wish to support them and their carers, priority is therefore given to them after the school has met the requirements of the Trust Deed to provide for baptised Catholics [living in the agreed parish(es)]. Catholic looked after children should always be given the first right of admission.

A map of the parish or designated area is necessary to resolve any border dispute.

Paragraph 6: Tie breakers are essential and may be different for different categories of priority as in our model. In Categories 1 and 2 it is suggested that if all applicants cannot be admitted priority be given to **Looked After Children, then to brothers/sisters to "keep the family together"** and after them to those who have furthest to go to the nearest available Catholic school. While the sibling priority operates in other categories, distance from the school is then used. Please note our comments on how distance might be calculated and be aware that pupils with different priority may live in the same

household or block of flats etc. Whatever measure is used choose one that is less open to dispute. Some LAs are able and willing to measure the nearest available walking distance. If your LA is able to do this and the school's designated area normally covers only your LA area this is to be preferred. If your catchment area crosses LA boundaries and one LA will not supply such a facility then "as the crow flies" or a route planner might be preferred.

With the increased proportion of multiple births due to fertility treatments, the DfES insists that governors explicitly state how they intend to deal with multiple births. Our suggestion is that they be given first preference in each tie-break situation and where the children still straddle the cut-off point that random allocation is used.

The DfES also states that a final tie-breaker be defined where all other factors are equal. We suggest random allocation (drawing of lots) in this event.

Paragraph 7: Explains how applications outside the normal round are dealt with.

Where an application for a place is made in-year for a looked after child by the relevant authority, the LA has the power, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, after consultation with the governors, to instruct the school to admit the child **even if this breaks the infant class size regulations**. The school will be exempt from the 30 in a class rule for the remainder of the academic year.

Paragraph 8 Deals with late applications. In some LAs, the common admission arrangements stipulate how late applications will be judged. Where they do not or where the common admission arrangements leave this to the discretion of governors, it is important that the governors' Admissions Committee determines whether there are exceptional circumstances in an objective, consistent and fair manner e.g. a family moving into the area from a reasonable distance and so not able to express a preference before, late adoption of a child or movement of a child into care would appear to be good reasons. Failure to submit a preference through forgetfulness etc or moving a short distance over a parish/LA boundary would not normally be considered good grounds.

Paragraph 9: The governing body is required to give such information so that parents can assess their chances of whether their application will be successful.

Paragraph 10: If an application is refused the governing body is legally obliged to give the parents a full explanation in writing. This should tell them how many pupils have been admitted and in what categories, and where their child comes in the order of priority for admissions, and how to appeal.

Paragraph 11 The school is required to admit a child with a Statement if it is named on the Statement. The LA is required to meet parental preference, if possible, but must consult the governing body before making its decision. Children with Statements come first, although the procedure is different, and normally count against the Admission Number.

(Revised April 2006)

CHURCHES IN FULL COMMUNION WITH ROME

The following Eastern Catholic Churches are autonomous particular Churches in full communion with the Pope in Rome:

- Coptic Catholic Church
- Ethiopic Catholic Church
- Maronite Church
- Syrian Catholic Church
- Syro-Malankara Catholic Church
- Armenian Catholic Church
- Chaldean Catholic Church
- Syro-Malabar Catholic Church
- Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church
- Belarusian Greek Catholic Church
- Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church
- Byzantine Church of the Eparchy of Krizevci
- Greek Byzantine Catholic Church
- Hungarian Greek Catholic Church
- Italo-Albanian Catholic Church
- Macedonian Greek Catholic Church
- Melkite Greek Catholic Church
- Romanian Church United with Rome
- Russian Byzantine Catholic Church
- Ruthenian Catholic Church
- Slovak Greek Catholic Church
- Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church

from Catholic Education Service

October 2007